



## THE CARE OF THE COMPLEXION

BY SHIRLEY DARE

NOT so much devotion is given a fair complexion now as in the days when Dolly Madison's Quaker mother sent her to school every morning along country roads with a linen mask over her face, long linen mittens on her arms and a sunbonnet sewed tightly to the mask, so that the little seven-year-old could not take it off till it was ripped off.

Nowadays it is more to the point to study a girl's diet and personal habits than to veil and shade her till her breath is half cut off. When a rosebud will eat eight cream cakes at a sitting dulness of complexion must follow, though she lives indoors. But when her appetite is regulated, and she lives out of doors on beach and hilltop, the sun bleaches and brings out the vivid rose tint, provided always that she eats home-made brown bread, goes to bed at 9 or 10 o'clock, bathes twice or more a week in cold weather, oftener in warm, and is out of doors at least three hours every day of her life.

The skin which clothes our bodies must be kept in the freshest condition. The difference between the hasty "wash" and thorough bathing deserves consideration. For young women in good flesh the cool bath may be most agreeable and good. But in case of languor, pallor and stiffness of the limbs the hot bath is best, quite as hot as the skin can bear, and rendered more cleansing with ammonia, borax or pearline. Remain in it ten minutes, to let the skin absorb the water, soaking off the old layer, softening and stimulating the new growth and suppling the joints.

Keep the water hot while taking a thorough rub with good soap, then let it run clear, adding lavender or any pleasant toilet water for a refreshing finish. Keep the head wet in cool water if any sense of fullness there is felt. Wipe with warm towels, to lose none of the stimulating heat which sends the blood coursing through the veins, renewing worn tissues and carrying away obstructions. The hot bath well followed, in other matters leads to growth of stature, no matter what age, before the decline of life sets in. The power to grow again, which Dr. Weir Mitchell says often follows a typhoid or yellow fever, adding half an inch to height in six months may be gained without such risks by strict attention to health, aided by the hot bath. This kindly agent sweeps away millions of dead molecules by the skin, warding off obesity, congestion, rheumatic stiffness and a host of unlovely disorders, and the least any one can do to keep decent is to take a hot bath with soap and hot towels twice a week. The wiping should be leisurely and repeated, to absorb the free-flowing perspiration, and the best practice after towelling is to wrap the body in a warm bath gown of Turkish towelling and lie down in a well-heated, well-aired room for a good rest. This restores tone all over, doubles the benefit of the bath, and does away with the risk of taking cold, which, however, diminishes with the habit of hot bathing. The best way for busy people is to take the bath between 8 and 9 o'clock in the evening, put on clean clothes and go straight to bed to read and rest till sleepy. The early sleep and the bath sleep keep women young.

Rubbing warm oil on the joints and heating it in before a fire promotes suppleness and prevents rheumatic malaise. An old superstition of hunters and opera dancers, to whom lightness and agility are indispensable, is to heat deer suet and the fat of goats and antelopes, and rub it well into the joints. From observation, one is greatly disposed to value the practices of people who are not given to throwing away their trouble. Flaxseed embrocations assist in suppling the joints, and are made by soaking the seed twelve hours in five times as much cold water, then pressing the mucilage through cheese-cloth, heating and binding it hot upon the joints when going to bed. Friction with thick flannel or mullein leaves, bathing with hot water after tiring exer-

cise, or cool water when fevered, keep the joints in good condition and preserve the elastic gait and easy motions which are the soonest lost of woman's graces.

Actresses work hard to gain and keep pliancy of limb. I know one ambitious creature of rounded figure who at first, like most women, could hardly lift her arms to do her own hair, whose stage training included a variety of muscular exercise fatiguing to inspect. To stand and kick at a mantel sixty times with one foot and as many times with the other for two hours a day gave pliancy of leg and ankle. To stoop and touch the floor without bending the knee gave command of limb, but to do it a hundred times in a morning is harder work than you or I have undertaken. Then came exercise with the gymnastic pull of stout rubber cords a yard long, with wooden handles, screwed to the wall, by which one might grip, swing, wrestle, hang backward at full weight, or turn hand over hand till the figure lost all the disabilities of ordinary too, too solid flesh and blood and seemed plastic to sentiment, as nature ordained. Most systems of gymnastic exercises for indolent women and overtrained girls are so artificial, formal and worthless for practical ends that they have no use in our scheme of beauty.

If the early Greek girls were more beautiful than any other women the sun ever shown upon, they were also useful as few have been before or since. It is work, duty, most musical of words, which perpetuate beauty. The shape-liest hands I ever saw and the slenderest natural waists belonged to two of the hardest working women who had wrought since childhood at common domestic duties.

I wish I could reach the mothers of a certain class, families of no special fortune, with income large enough for the small gentilities of life, the very last ones who should fall out of traditional activities—shopkeepers' and ministers' and upper clerks' families, whose mothers, with mistaken indulgence, are letting their daughters grow up without duties and without work. School, fancy work, a little music, some church work, some society, some pottering about flower beds, some driving, fill their time, but not one thing to really develop muscle or start healthy blood. They go to bed when they please, get up when they please, eat what coaxes their squeamish appetites and take walks when other girls come for them.

Let your girls do housekeeping vigorously mornings, or work—not potter—in the garden, dance or play tennis afternoons and sing part songs in the evenings; but never let them shirk the interest, the development, that lies in real work.

The bath is woman's best antidote to pain, the tonic for her strength and preservative of freshness. Chronic irregularities and periodic attacks of pain seldom refuse to yield to a course of varied baths. From the time girls enter their teens preliminary aches and languor call for hot foot baths. One of the best foot tubs is the three-gallon tin can in which peppermint oil comes for druggists, which allows the legs to be immersed to the knees. Such a leg bath with very warm soap and water sitz bath on retiring, wiping on warm towels and getting immediately into a warm bed, with hot bricks or soapstones, is hygiene, which steals a countermarch on the acute disorders which ruin a girl's scholarship, good looks and comfort. In contradiction to nearly all doctors' advice on the subject, I say, don't finish the hot bath with a cool douche or sponge in cases where there is ache or pain, however slight. Warmth is vitality and anodyne to pain. Rather have a robe of Turkish towelling to slip over the night gown warmed for sleeping. It leaves one so warm that she can sleep with the window open—so much the better for her complexion and well-being. Fresh air by night and day is a far more wholesome tonic than any amount of cold bathing. The first approach of malaise with girls should be a signal for prompt curative practice of the kind named. This prevents the flushing and pimples, the headaches and fractiousness, of growing girls. When these disappear, or a few days after, is the time for cold sponging of the back below the waist and the hip muscles. Finish by rubbing with alcohol or bay spirit. Such treatment transforms girls from lumpish, awkward creatures to supple, vivacious ones, if they are not educated to death over their books.



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